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Colorado officials trying to identify woman struck by lightning

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Sheila Flynn
Denver, Colorado

The unidentified woman was found by this tree in Superior, Colorado

Colorado authorities are asking for help in identifying a lightning strike victim who is currently in critical condition in hospital.

A woman on a suburban Colorado walking path was struck by lightning on Thursday evening. Bystanders who found her unresponsive carried out CPR until emergency workers arrived.

The woman, who is believed to be between 20 and 30 years old, was not carrying identification, and her phone was severely damaged in the strike in Superior, about 20 miles (32km) northwest of Denver.

Her fingerprints are not in the system, the sheriff's office said in a Facebook post, describing her as 5'5, white and 120lbs (54kg), with "red or auburn-coloured hair".

She was wearing a green running shirt, black running shorts with white stripes and white or pink running shoes, but authorities were unable to determine the brand.

She was also wearing a grey or black windbreaker-style jacket. She has three butterfly tattoos on her upper right arm.

The Good Samaritans found the victim after they "witnessed or heard a loud boom and then went outside to see what they could see, based on that loud noise – and that is when

they saw her", public information officer Carrie Haverfield told the BBC.

The sheriff's office responded to the call about the victim at approximately 17:39 local time (23:39 GMT).
The woman had no detectable pulse and was not breathing when first responders arrived, After continued resuscitation efforts, she regained a faint pulse and began breathing on her own but remained unconscious.

She has since been airlifted to a Denver hospital.

By mid-morning on Friday, she had "regained a regular heart rate" and was breathing independently but remains in critical condition, the sheriff's office said.

"Obviously, we want to connect her with her loved ones and family, so they can be there at the hospital with her," Haverfield said.

"So we're asking the community if they have anyone fitting the description put out, a loved one, family member, who they've been unable to get ahold of."

Superior is on Colorado's Front Range, with prairie and foothills, not in the mountains, and the state sees a "fair amount of lightning strikes", she added – though usually at higher elevation.

Authorities have also reviewed missing persons reports in

an attempt to ID the woman but have so far found no matches.

"We are not releasing a photo right now because she sustained significant trauma from the lightning strike and she does not look like herself," the department posted on Friday.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, about 40 million lightning strikes hit the ground in the US annually but the odds of being struck by one are less than one in a million in a given year.

Colorado sees an estimated 500,000 lightning strikes to ground per year, according to the National Weather Service.

Citing the Lightning Safety Council, it also reported that Colorado ranks third in the US in lightning fatalities – with Florida and Texas respectively taking the top two spots – based on data collected between 2006 and 2024.

Colorado authorities have asked anyone with information about the Superior victim to contact the sheriff's office.

Colorado United States

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